




# HEROES OF AIR AND SEA



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# HEROES OF AIR AND SEA

*By*  
Isabel Hornibrook



*Published by*  
David C. Cook Publishing Co.  
Elgin, Illinois

(1913)

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# HEROES OF AIR AND SEA

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*By ISABEL HORNIBROOK*

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE BOY GOLFER.

“WELL, this is the slowest place that I was ever in. Is there anything at all to be done here?”

Blair Hammond, aged fifteen, seated himself despondently upon a low stone wall bordering a highway of Cape Ann, and emitted a whistle, drawn-out and dismal, which showed him to have entered upon the third degree of boredom.

“I’d put a patent on that whistle, lad, if I were you! It’s quite new and original in these parts,” drawled the person addressed, a weather-beaten old seaman, disdaining a direct answer to the question put to him.

“Well! it is a dead place,” urged the boy, his discontented gaze roving over stretches of pasture and woodland girdled by sea, to a more appreciative eye teeming with life and beauty. “There doesn’t seem to be anything exciting going on.”

“What did you expect to find here—at Myrtle Cove? A sort of Wonderland, where you could ‘shoot the chutes’ and fly around in mock airships, until you’d feel as if your heels had changed places with your head—is that the sort of thing you’re pining for, eh, lad?” inquired the elderly sailor.

Blair had a suspicion that this gray-bearded sea captain—whose voice had the habitual, though kindly, bluster of a

man who has often shouted orders to his crew with the sea slapping him in the face and drowning his words—was secretly laughing at him for his moping self-pity. But he remembered that he was the son of a rich bank director; that his father could buy up a dozen such vessels as this old man had commanded; so he answered with an important air of knowing the world better than the graybeard:

"I don't want a 'Wonderland,' but other years we—father, mother, my sister and I—have gone to a fine shore resort and stayed at a big hotel where there was an entertainment every evening, with yacht races in the daytime, and other fun! Last spring my sister was ill, the doctor advised my father to bring her to Cape Ann—to a quiet spot—so he took that villa back there on Surf Avenue." The boy nodded over his shoulder at the gables of a summer home rising above an intervening stretch of woodland. "But there's no excitement of any kind here; it makes me tired."

Repeating the whistle of self-pity, Blair dropped his chin dejectedly into the collar of his sweater; a startling sweater it was, very long, of the lightest, finest wool and the most vivid crimson hue.

"It depends upon what you call 'excitement' whether there's any here, or not," remarked the elderly sailor. "For instance, out there at the ocean breakwater which Uncle Sam is building two miles off shore, there are no less than fourteen divers at work to-day who find life exciting enough, because every time that they go down under the sea there is the possibility that they may never see the sun again. Ever see a diver go down at close quarters, lad?"

"No; I guess I'm not interested in seeing divers go down. What I want to see is an aviator *go up!*"

For the first time during the conversation the boy's moping eyes sparkled with life.



"Ah! Now you're talking," exclaimed the old man vivaciously. "I want to see a man-bird myself. I've fought the sea at its wildest a hundred times and got the better of it," he added in a gust of energy, speaking more to himself than to his listener. "But what I want to see is the man who has conquered the air!"

"Who knows but we *may* get a chance to see an aviator making a flight around this Cape one of these fine summer days?" he went on presently. "In the meantime, can't you hunt up some pastime, lad? It seems to me that, as we sailors say, 'you're in everybody's mess and nobody's watch,' just now; which means that you have nothing in particular to do. Don't you row and swim?"

"I do, some."

Blair's listless answer betrayed to the shrewd old sea-fighter that the boy had, up to the present, loved surface pleasure so much as even to shun the work necessary to perfect himself in these sports. "I play golf a little," added the lad presently. "My uncle is a champion golfer and he taught me. He said that it took years to make a player and I might as well begin young. My golf-bag is in the field there," glancing down at a leather case reposing on the grass behind him. "Somebody told father that there were golf links here. Where are they?"

"Over there!" The seaman pointed toward a broad expanse of pasture-land sloping upward in a gentle hill, from whose crest came distant sounds of drilling and hammering, with the faint rattle of a hoisting engine—all the noises of a busy granite quarry.

"Pshaw! those granite quarries spoil the Cape," grumbled the boy, gazing off at a barely visible quarry engine house plumed with dark smoke.

"Some of the finest buildings in Massachusetts have come out of them just the same," was the reproving rejoinder. "I wouldn't play golf on those links to-day, if I were you, my lad," suggested the old man, as Blair

jumped into the field, picked up his golf-bag with its assortment of clubs, and vaulted back into the road, showing an agility in bright contrast to his "dumpish" mood. "The ground is rough; nobody has played on it since the Myrtle Cove hotel was burned down six weeks ago. And old man Jewett has been pasturing his cows on the upper end for the past few days. I hear there's a young bull among them that's quite a sprinter."

"If he's young I guess I could scare him off with a golf-stick," Blair's laugh had the ring of ignorance, as he slipped the strap of his golf-bag over his shoulder. "But I must find somebody to act 'caddy' for me. *Could you?*" He turned to a sturdy-looking boy, five months younger than himself, who came strolling up.

The Cape boy shook his head.

"No, I've got to do some errands for Captain Andy—my grandfather, I mean," he answered, nodding toward the old man.

"They call me 'Captain Andy' hereabouts; my name is Andrew Davis," explained the seaman. "This is my grandson, Quintin Davis, popularly known as Quin; he has been my right hand since the main boom of my vessel fell on me in a storm a few months ago and broke my arm and leg. Take my advice and don't go over to the golf links, lad. They say that young bull chased an Italian quarryman day before yesterday, who came near jumping down into a quarry pit to escape him, but saved himself by hopping onto a moving stone-car instead. And that flaming sweater of yours might get on the animal's nerves."

"Oh, I guess the Italian was 'stretching it' a little; his doesn't sound like a real bull story." Blair laughed, still obstinately moving off, with his golf-bag under his arm.

The boy had a shrewd suspicion that Captain Andrew had formed a poor opinion of him during their brief conversation. He felt that now was his opportunity to prove

to the old man and the strange boy that this "dead" place held no danger big enough to scare him.

Captain Andy looked musingly after him as he walked away.

"That city boy is smart enough, Quin," he said. "And he's built to be as active as they make 'em. The trouble with *him* is he's been reared in a flowerpot! Well, as we can't head him off from playing golf, let us stroll round by the lane that skirts the links to Jewett's farm; I'll give Sam Jewett a piece of my mind about keeping that young bull out there, and get him to send out a farm hand, to see that that obstinate lad doesn't come to harm." The old man moved his right side stiffly as he spoke. "Then we'll go on to the quarry and I'll telephone from there to Mr. Hammond telling him that his son has not brought quite the right brand of daring to the Cape."

Meanwhile, Blair had reached the mound which formed the first "tee" at the starting point of the golf links.

Taking a handful of sand from the heap placed there for former players, he set the hard little golf-ball on it, and letting swing with his "driver" sent the ball a hundred yards over the rough course.

"Pretty good!" he murmured to himself. "Two more drives will land in the 'putting green,' near the first hole."

He started and at the same time from that distant engine house on the crest of the hill came a loud shrill whistle announcing to the quarrymen that their day's work was over, this being Saturday afternoon.

Blair had forgotten the disfiguring quarries, and Farmer Jewett's sprinting young bull, as he picked up his bag of clubs and followed the ball.

Becoming absorbed in his play, he was driving for the fifth hole when another ear-splitting whistle startled him; this time it came from a red-funneled tugboat lying beside a quarry pier jutting out into the sea, to which the other side of the hill sloped down.

"Pshaw! that whistle made me jump," ejaculated the boy, suddenly awakening to the fact that there was not a human being in sight, that the noises in the quarry, including the friendly cackle of the hoisting engine, had ceased, and that he was between Jewett's cows and that granite quarry.

Among the cattle there was one spectator apparently so deeply interested in Blair's play that he seemed ambitious of becoming a golfer himself; this was a small, wiry young bull whose distant salmon-colored hide shone in the sun like pink satin.

"I wish he wouldn't look at me so; it—it brings the gooseflesh," gurgled the boy, conscious of a corresponding wish that he had stayed with Captain Andy and his grandson.

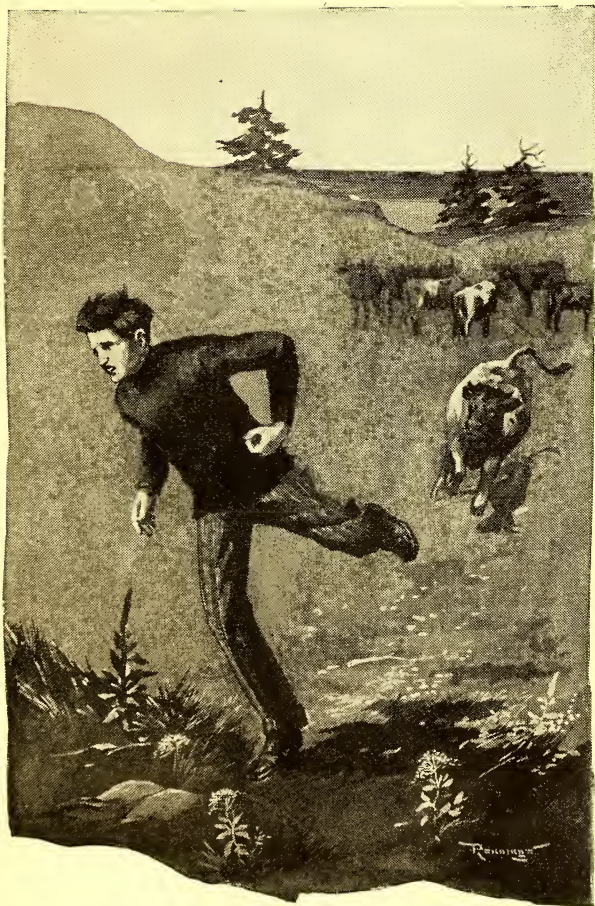
Bravely he placed his ball on the fourth "tee," a shaggy mound, and made a wabby drive at it with his driver. At the same instant there was a distant, menacing bellow. That salmon-colored young bull had become suddenly wrathful at sight of the crimson sweater elevated on the mound.

"I declare! He's *coming* for me; c-coming at a clip!" The panic-stricken words kicked in Blair's throat. He had a momentary wild idea of facing that angry quadruped with a golf-club. But the resolution was blown off like a bubble by his terrified breath.

Down went the "driver" into the grass beside its brother clubs. Blair fled for his life in the direction of the despised quarry—toward that gray engine-house—the only visible refuge.

Its door was open. For the engineer, having dumped his fire and drawn off the water from the boiler, had stepped out to gossip in a neighboring shed, while waiting for that boiler to cool sufficiently to enable him to do a Saturday afternoon's cleaning on it and his engine.

Fighting off a paralysis of terror, Blair made for that



BLAIR FLED TOWARD THE ENGINE HOUSE.

open door in an agony which made him see two or three gray engine-sheds instead of one.

His tongue lolled like that of his bovine pursuer as he darted in. There was no time to close the rude plank door and fumble for a bolt in this unknown place. A half-glance over his shoulder showed the bull but twenty yards behind him, its tail lashing its thin, heaving sides as it charged ferociously with lowered head for that flaming red sweater which aroused its indignation, being the opposite color to the green of the pasture on which it fed.

At the sight Blair staggered. His eyes frantically searched the engine-house for any barricade against the enemy. The low hoisting engine, with its spool-like drums which worked the derricks that hoisted stone, offered no barrier should the bull pursue him into the shed. The furious animal might only crowd and corner him.

Sick with horror, the boy who only half an hour before had complained petulantly because he missed a few diversions, saw that he had only run into a trap. He could almost feel that young bull's horns making their first deadly onslaught on his back.

But, as Captain Andy had said, he was quick-witted. In the shadows of the engine-house loomed the tall upright boiler, like an ebony pillar. The door of its fire-box sagged open, showing only dead ashes where the engineer had drawn his fire.

Blair's dizzy eyes saw two shining black boilers. His breath coming in whistling gasps, he flung himself at one of them; it was the solid one, not the double which his imagination provided.

Like a wireless message in a fog, the blurred idea darted through him that his only way of escape was to climb to the top of that nine-foot boiler.

Placing one foot on a projection called the "mud-cock," just above the still hot bed-plate, he reached up and grasped the brass rods of the water gauge.



Drawing himself up desperately, he managed to get his left foot on another projection, the hand-hole cover, and thence, with the help of a protruding valve or two, to reach the dome of the boiler where, curling his legs up, he twined himself round the steel chimney, reckless of blistering hands.

The bull, pursuing him into the engine-house, butted that warm bed-plate with his horns. But the cast iron base of the steel boiler, firmly bolted to the ground, did not tremble; and the angry quadruped backing off from it, stood blocking the narrow doorway, his tail switching his salmon-colored sides, which heaved with a low, baffled bellow.

"You did—didn't get—me!" An hysterical sound, half a laugh and half a scream bubbled up from the depths of mortal fear in Blair, which had been stirred for the first time. "This—old—boiler—is too m-much for you!" panted the boy, breathing defiance at the enemy while his crimson arms hugged the steel smokestack as if it were the warm neck of a protector. Blair's laugh was more pronounced this time. "I declare this is worse than being treed by a moose."



## CHAPTER II.

### THE RAFT.

“THIS is worse than being treed by a moose; I—I didn’t bargain for this kind of excitement!” panted Blair breathlessly, as he hugged the steel chimney of the boiler in that quarry engine-house, and hurled defiance at the bull which still blocked the narrow doorway.

The boy was shaking all over from terror at his narrow escape.

“I wonder if he means to ‘stick me out’; to keep me here till midnight?” he speculated. For that angry young bull showed no intention of retreating. Once and again he butted the base of the boiler with baffled horns, sending a gust of shudders down Blair’s backbone.

But the quarry boiler was an impregnable fortress.

“You can sharpen your horns on it all day, old fellow,” laughed the boy, on whom the comical aspect of the situation was dawning, with returning breath and the sense of safety.

“This isn’t the most comfortable perch in the world, but it isn’t hot enough to burn me through my clothing; so I guess I can tire you out.” In the great relief from danger Blair hardly felt the trifling blisters on his hands from their contact with the still hot steel in his climb.

“I wonder whether the quarry engineer has gone home or if he’ll be coming back here?” pondered the boyish refugee; “I’m beginning to get kinks in my limbs.”

Almost immediately he gave a great gasp of mingled relief and apprehension. Over the bull’s back he saw through the doorway the head and shoulders of a man



in black linens, who threw up his hands with an amazed cry as he saw the horned besieger blocking the threshold of his engine-house.

The quarry engineer, for it was he, disappeared like lightning, to reappear almost as speedily armed with a long pole, and accompanied by a brawny-armed quarry blacksmith who carried as weapon a tool taken from his forging fire.

The engineer attacked the bull from behind with his pole, and as the belligerent young animal turned upon him, it was met by the blacksmith with his tool. Before the hot iron actually touched him, however, the bull, realizing that this kind of warfare was not to his taste, swerved nimbly and beat a retreat to his pasture.

The engineer sprang into the engine-house and stared aloft in comical amazement at the boy in the vivid sweater perched upon the dome of the black boiler, affectionately embracing its half-cool chimney.

"So the bull chased you in here, did he?" laughed the man in black linens. "And you had to climb the boiler to escape him; 'twas a good thing for you it wasn't very hot. Here, let me help you down; I guess you've got kinks in your backbone!"

Blair was eagerly preparing to descend when his eyes, which had not lost the wildness of fear, dilated suddenly; his face took on the hue of his sweater: at the engine-house doorway were two other spectators, old Captain Andy, whose warnings he had disregarded, and his grandson, Quintin.

"Hullo! my lad, I guess you'd have done better to have minded me," breezed the old sea-captain, as the boiler refugee with the engineer's help jumped to the ground. "I came up here to the quarry on purpose to telephone to your father. It was well for you that the engineer had dumped his fire and drew off the water from his boiler directly after sounding the steam-whistle for work to stop."

"Well! I've heard of many queer escapes, but climbing a quarry boiler to avoid an angry bull beats 'em all, up to date," exclaimed that young engineer, slapping his side, and bursting into a roar of laughter—for he was little more than a boy himself.

Captain Andy's fourteen-year-old grandson Quintin whom Blair had condescendingly invited to act as "caddy" for him while he played golf, joined in the laugh. So did the brawny blacksmith.

The ears of the rescued lad tingled. Only an hour ago he had regarded himself—boy, though he was—as of considerable importance in this "slow" place. Now, here were two quarry workmen and the strange Cape boy all laughing boisterously at the predicament in which his own foolhardiness had landed him.

But the danger through which Blair had just passed was like a threshing-mill; it had blown away the chaff of self-consequence and discontent, freeing the fine grain of real boyhood. He pulled himself together and joined shakily in the mirth.

"I guess I got only what was c-coming to me for not taking your advice," he stammered when the mirth subsided, looking respectfully at Captain Andrew. "I'll be wiser next time, Captain."

Captain Andy's old eyes twinkled. He loved all boys. Secretly he had been setting this one down as a "sissy" and "flowerpot fellow." Now he acknowledged the real boy. None but a real boy could take discomfiture like that!

He laid his hand, big and warm, on Blair's shoulder.

"You're not a laughing-stock, my lad," he said; "far from it! You kept your nerve and showed presence of mind in climbing that boiler to save yourself, when persons older than you are might have been too fogged with fear to think of it. Otherwise, the bull would have attacked you here in the engine-house. Let me see

your hands; oh! they're not burned much to speak of."

"But—" he bent down to Blair's ear, "in future, lad, don't go about blowing the smoke of your little troubles into other people's nostrils—it's not manly; nor doing something foolhardy to offset it—that's not courage! Now, Quin and I will cruise along home with you by a path that doesn't lead through the golf links."

Ten minutes later as the trio were strolling toward Blair's summer home together, Captain Andrew turned to the city boy:

"If you're hard up for amusement," he said, "why don't you take a trip with me to that Government breakwater of which I was telling you, which is being built to create a safe harbor for ships, and see those fourteen divers at work. The 'Etna,' that tugboat which is lying by the quarry pier now, will be going out there on Monday, towing the flat scow laden with stone for the breakwater. My son has command of the 'Etna'; no not Quintin's father," hastily; "Quin's father was drowned when he was a small boy."

"I'd like to go very much," Blair's answer showed more interest in amphibious divers than he had manifested an hour ago; he had learned the great pain of danger, and he began to feel a respect for anyone who necessarily faced it in the service of his fellow men.

But he was quite unprepared for the wonder of the sight which greeted him when on the following Monday he stood on the "Etna's" deck as the tugboat lay moored beside that growing ocean breakwater.

The August sea was so perfectly calm and clear that Blair, peering into it, could see as if he were looking down fifty feet through tier after tier of green glass, over a dozen strange figures moving round upon the sea-bed, like goblins of the deep!

Grotesque, bulky, round-headed figures they appeared to be. And they worked as busily as any colony of bea-

vers building a dam under water, as they moved great rocks down there in the greenish twilight beneath the ocean, and piled them up at the base of the breakwater.

A gust of feeling like a breeze from a strange climate swept over Blair at the sight, stirring even his hair. He knew that these men were the ocean divers, and that they were not toiling for their own ends, but building up a future protection for storm-tossed vessels, threatened with destruction by the sea.

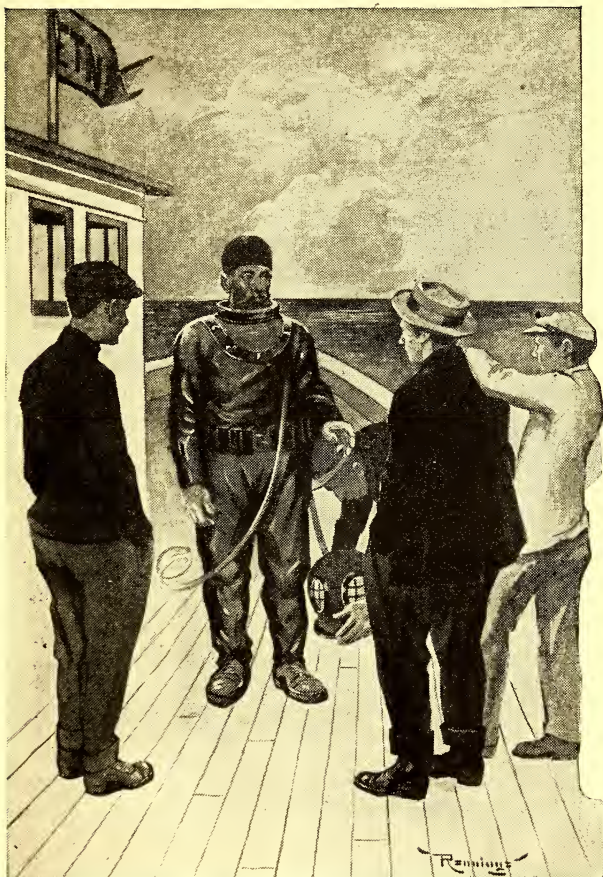
"I declare! it makes one feel more of a man even to watch them," he blurted out involuntarily to Quintin Davis, who stood by him.

These two boys who had known each other only about forty-eight hours, were chums already. There had been a little diffidence between them at first, which was blown away on the trip out, when Quin startled Blair by tiptoeing up behind him and speaking into his ear through the tugboat's megaphone, which made his tones like the voices of three giants melted into one, asking him "whether he had recovered from his bull-scare yet?"

Blair retaliated by wresting the huge trumpet from him and chasing him round the deck with it. After which, the ice having been effectually broken, they amused themselves by hailing every passing fishing vessel and lumbering coaster through the megaphone, with bantering salutations.

Now, as they stood watching these submarine divers through the glassy sea, Quin plucked at the sleeve of Blair's crimson sweater.

"*Uncle Jim* is going down himself to-day!" he exclaimed excitedly, pointing to the master of the tugboat who was known ashore and afloat as "Captain Jim," to distinguish him from his father, Captain Andrew Davis. "As the 'Etna's' captain, *Uncle Jim* has to practice diving; he has to go down to see about the placing of the stone which is lowered to the breakwater."



"DON'T YOU WANT TO SEE MY TENDER MAKE  
MY TOILET?" ASKED CAPTAIN JIM.

"He's going to use his *diver's raft*, too," Quintin went on, "because the sea is so calm and he wants to move from point to point to inspect some work which has been done by the other divers. Oh! wouldn't it be gr-reat if he'd take us out on the raft with him?"

"'Twould be immense!" Blair was feeling that not all the entertainments he had ever known at fashionable sea-side resorts could compare for excitement with the thrill of watching these heroes of the deep at their unselfish work. Already, it had made him want to be "more of a man," less easy-going and less selfish.

"Well, as a rule I don't take passengers with me, but I'm willing to make an exception to-day in favor of you boys—if you'll promise not to wreck the raft!" suddenly said the big voice of Captain Jim Davis behind them; he had descended from the tugboat's turret pilot-house, leaving his father, old Captain Andy in charge of the "Etna." "Don't you want to see the 'tender' make my toilet, Blair?" he added laughingly. "A diver's toilet is a 'weighty matter,' I assure you!"

Then he seated himself on a stool while one of the tugboat's crew who acted as "tender" or attendant, invested him with the heavy copper breastplate, studded with thumbscrews by which it was screwed to the rubber dress.

"If I were to put on the rest of my armor now, I couldn't heave myself over the tugboat's side," chuckled Captain Jim presently, rising heavily to his feet.

"Lower away the raft!" he commanded. And a flat raft some twelve feet long and eight wide was lowered upon the tranquil sea and held steady while the diver dropped cautiously onto it, balancing himself right on the middle of the flat structure.

The remainder of his armor helmet, belt and iron slippers, were lowered to him, followed by the airpump, from which air would be pumped through the hose into his hel-



met, the hose itself and coiled lifeline. The diver's two attendants, tender and pump-man, dropped onto the raft, too, together with Blair and Quintin.

Quin's thirteen-year-old brother Owen who had come out with them on the "Etna," watched the departure and wished he might go, too.

"This is great; this *is* exciting!" murmured Blair, curling himself upon the raft.

But the climax of excitement was yet to come when old Captain Andy suddenly thrust his head out of the "Etna's" pilot-house, waving a newspaper as if it were a flag.

"Whoo'! Whoo'! Boys! I've big news for you!" he whooped. "We've all been wishing to see an aviator! Well, there's one on the Cape now, with his monoplane. And who should he be but Harry Desper—little Harry Desper—who spent a summer at Myrtle Cove with his family when he was the same age as you youngsters. He's only 'a boy of a man,' as you might say now—barely twenty-one!" chuckled the old sailor. "I taught him how to manage a sailboat on the sea, and now he's piloting an airship! The paper says that he has only lately entered 'the fields of aëronautics,' and is going to try out his machine by making flights around the Cape, preparatory to taking part in one of the great air races from Boston to Boston Light."

"Hurrah! Who knows but that we may get a chance to see him to-day—from the diver's raft—flying over the breakwater?" Blair's face grew tense at such a glorious possibility, while his eyes and imagination soared aërially. "This is simply immense," he added, as that flat raft was pushed off with a boat hook from the tugboat's side. "But I feel as if I had just been shipwrecked!"

## CAPTER III.

### A WINGED MAN.

TO THE two boys floating on the diver's raft over the tranquil sea, it was the most exciting cruise they had ever known. Crouching on the flat structure with their chins between their knees, they imagined themselves shipwrecked sailors drifting on a desert shore; or savages who did not know how to construct a better craft.

The raft was propelled over the glassy ripples with a boat hook, as an Indian would pole a canoe downstream, by one of the diver's attendants who would presently work the air-pump and supply air to the diver through his helmet, when he fell to working on the sea bed.

This "pump-man," as he was called, assumed control of the two passengers, directing them where to sit so as to balance the diver's weight upon the raft, and threatening them with dire penalties when in their imaginary rôle of undeveloped savages they waxed boisterous and threatened to capsize it.

"If you begin to 'cut up' on the raft, I'll heave you overboard and let you swim back to the 'Etna'!" Thus he threatened them. "This isn't a birch-bark canoe where you have to part your hair in the middle to avoid capsizing it; still as the edge of the raft is elevated only three inches above the water you could tip it down pretty easily. You see we distribute the weight of the pump and the diver's armor so as to balance it."

"Well, it isn't as bad as an aëroplane which an aviator might capsize with a good big sneeze—that's what I've read!" remarked Quintin, whose keen young eyes every now and then searched the dappled blue sky for any sign



of the aëronaut who, according to newspaper report, might be seen from now on making flights around the Cape, for Harry Desper on his monoplane.

"If I should try not to sneeze, that's the time I'd be sure to bring out a thumping big one!" laughed Blair, keeping an eye on the fleecy cloudlets, too.

But now his attention was chained by a sight as new to him as would be an ascending aëroplane—that of the diver beside him preparing to go down.

That diver, Captain Jim, occupied the only seat upon the raft, a humble stool. He had removed his nautical-looking cap, substituting a knitted red one whose scarlet tassel capered in the slight breeze now springing up.

"He looks like a grand Turk, or a Sultan of some out-of-the-way place in that loose gray dress, copper breastplate and tasseled cap," commented Blair as the diver made ready to don the rest of his armor.

"Hand me my 'Cinderella slippers'!" joked that amphibious knight to his attendant. "Try and lift one of them!" to Blair.

The boy did so.

"Ouch!" he cried, as he lifted the iron slipper, weighing twenty-three pounds, a few inches from the raft. "I should think a diver's toilet is a 'weighty matter'!"

But once again that strange sensation like a breeze from a new climate swept over Blair, making his skin feel chilly while all his heart bubbled up inside him; for the diver weighted now with breastplate and slippers, rose laboriously to his feet; and with one great stride—for Captain Jim was a powerful man—heaved himself onto a short ladder, the top rungs of which were lashed to the raft's side, and the rest of it submerged in the supporting waves.

As the diver balanced himself on that descending ladder with half his body out of water—while the boys, pump-man and pump distributed their weight so as to steady the

raft—the tender buckled upon him the leaden belt weighing a trifling matter of a hundred pounds, and held the round copper helmet weighing forty poised above his head.

Ere that helmet descended the diver shot a glance at his boyish passengers.

"So long, boys!" he said. "Perhaps you'll see me coming up feet foremost for fun."

But as he signaled to the attendant for his helmet, Captain Jim shot another glance, a grave look, upward at the summer sun, which he would see through the ocean's twilight only as a winking evening star, as if he were saying good-by to that too.

The helmet, with its four "bull's-eyes," or glass windows, descended, shutting him out from the sweet summer air, and was screwed to the collar of his dress.

The pump man who now grasped the brake of the patent air-pump, began to work that handle rhythmically, pumping air through the rubber hose, the other end of which was connected with a protruding "elbow" in the diver's helmet. Captain Jim backed down the ladder.

The glassy sea closed over him. A wave of feeling engulfed the boys at the same time. Blair could hardly account for the warm tickling in his throat. But as the diver disappeared, his eyes were wet and winking. He looked shamefacedly at Quin. The latter nodded back comprehendingly.

"I always feel like that, too, if I'm close to a diver when he goes down," said the Cape boy. "Uncle Jim is a good diver, and he's stronger in the dress than out of it—folks say he's a regular Samson in the dress. He's a good man, I tell you!" proudly. "Won't it be fun to see him come up, feet foremost in those iron slippers? Well, while we're waiting for it we may as well watch the sky for that aviator." Quin stretched himself on the raft, now rocking gently on the placid sea, stirred by a baby breeze.

Blair followed his example. Chin in hands, both boys stared expectantly skyward. The sea becoming a little ruffled and the depth being greater here, they could not watch the diver at work. Neither did they behold a man-bird soaring across the blue sky or hear the buzz of an *aéroplane*.

After twenty minutes of dreamy rocking there were three quick jerks on the diver's lifeline which the tender, now seated on the stool, held between his finger and thumb.

"He's signaling up from below. Three jerks. That means he's coming up to breathe!" cried Quintin.

With catlike caution the boys rose to their feet and stared at the sea, breaking into shout after shout of laughter as a pair of iron toes—the toes of those "*Cinderella slippers*"—were seen clearing the ripples. Turning a floundering somersault in the waves the diver landed on the ladder, his mittened hands grasping its sides.

"Bravo! that was comical," applauded the boys.

Captain Jim, his helmet removed, clung to the ladder for a few minutes, drinking in the summer air with great thirsty gasps.

"Boys, if you should see an aviator flying overhead, come and get me!" he laughed, preparing to go down again. "I'd like to see the man-bird's first appearance in our skies,"

"We won't see a 'man-bird'; that's too good to be true," murmured Quin pessimistically, stretching himself again upon the raft.

But scarcely had the diver's iron-shod feet again touched the bottom when the pump-man, staring off at the horizon, while he monotonously worked the brake or handle of the air-pump, gave a cry.

"There—*there* it is!" he exploded, "there's the monoplane! See—see that speck high above the headland? See—boys—see!" He was the only one on the raft who had seen an *aéroplane* before.

"It is! It is a flying machine. I can hear the engine!" he added in a low shout, inclining an ear forward, the excitement in his hitherto stolid face contrasting strangely with the slow, steady working of the air-pump on which depended the life of the diver below.

The boys were on their feet like a flash, less cautiously this time.

"Where? *Where is it?*" they cried gustily.

"There—I see it, too!" Blair's discovery exploded like a firecracker on the heels of his questioner. "*I see it!* Oh-oh-h! the big dragon fly!"

Quin had located it, too, now—that developing winged speck—skimming nearly a thousand feet above the bold cape headland. And in the wonder of it the boys' breathing was as the deep breathing of the sea about them—heavy, ruffled, joyous! Each felt as if all the thrills he had ever known were concentrated into one big joy thrill.

Here, on the diver's raft, they were between the hero of the deep and the hero of the air!

On came the monoplane, the glittering monster dragon fly, swimming toward the point of blue sky right above the breakwater. And beyond one or two gusty monosyllables the boys could not find speech to welcome it. They quivered from neck to heels with exultation, proud to be alive, proud to claim human brotherhood with that winged man—with Harry Desper—that "boy of a man," as old Captain Andy called him—now flying triumphantly above the sea.

Other generations before them had seen the advent of the train, steamboat, telegraph, telephone, "wireless," and many other discoveries; but, oh, as they vaguely felt, it was great to be a boy when this latest, greatest wonder of the world was in its boyhood—the conquest of the air!

"He's heading this way now—going to pass right over us, over the breakwater!" exclaimed Quintin in stifled tones, thrilling to his boots.



"LOOK OUT! YOU'LL CAPSIZE US," SHRIEKED  
THE TENDER IN ALARM.

The diver's tender had not signaled down to his chief, because he knew that nothing short of disaster could bring Captain Jim up from the sea bed when he was at work.

But old Captain Andy, left aboard the "Etna," had espied the aëroplane on high, piloted by "little Harry Desper," whom as a boy, he had taught to master one element, the sea, and who had now conquered the air.

In his excitement the old man directed the tugboat's engineer to salute the triumphant aviator with three loud screams of the "Etna's" steam whistle—a nautical three cheers.

Two other tugs, moored near the breakwater, took up the whistling, too, celebrating the first appearance of a man-bird on the cape shores.

The noise broke the spell which held the boys motionless. Together with the audible buzz of the monoplane's engine so high above them, it threw them into a frenzy of excitement. They burst into wild cheering, too.

As if dazed by that aërial buzz, Quin, forgetting that he was floating on another unstable element, on a flat raft that needed balancing, though not so nicely as the air craft above, made two blind steps toward the raft's edge.

Blair, his eyes riveted skyward on that superb air-conquering dragon fly, with the sun silvering its forward wings and the aluminum propeller (corresponding to the insect's head) which dragged it through the air, stepped rashly after him; both boys thus throwing their weight on one side of the raft with the tender and his stool.

"Look out! Look out! You'll capsize us. You'll tip over the raft!" shrieked the tender in alarm.

Too late! The raft's side had dipped already until the sea curled over it.

With cries so loud that it seemed as if they must be heard by the soaring aviator above, with a frantic flourishing of legs and arms the boys strove to right it and recover their equilibrium. In vain! The flat structure



dipped more still, like a tilting table, as the waves rippled over the edge.

The tender and pump-man, both nimble seamen, hung on desperately to the partly submerged raft, the former hugging the air-pump which meant breath to the diver below.

The two boys slid off into the sea, shrieking, while overhead the man-bird sailed proudly on.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE ASCENDING MONOPLANE.

**I**F THAT aviator on his monoplane, flying triumphantly over harbor and breakwater could, looking down, have beheld the catastrophe caused by his first appearance as a man-bird on the Cape coast, consternation would have filled him.

The flat raft, after playing a wild game of seesaw with the waves, righted itself without injury to the air-pump, which the pump-man had protected at risk to himself. The tender had lost his stool in the watery scrimmage; it slipped off into the sea with the boys, and cruised away on its own hook with its four sturdy legs in the air, like a kicking animal.

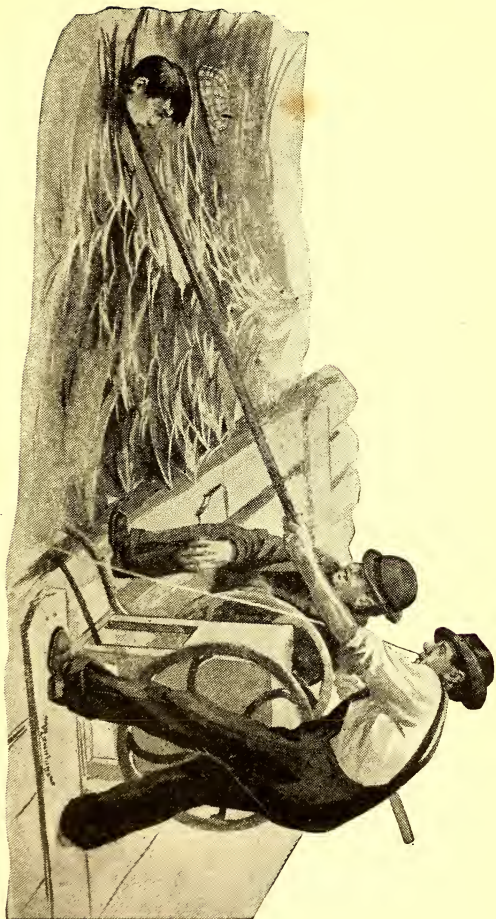
Quintin who, as a Cape boy, could swim like an eel, managed to scramble back onto the raft. But Blair, never having practiced swimming sufficiently to become expert for his age, hampered by his clothing, would have sunk speedily to join the diver on the sea bed, had not the tender, taking that diver's lifeline between his teeth, snatched up the boat hook whereby the raft had been propelled, which had not gone overboard. Hooking its iron crook into Blair's clothing, he lifted the struggling boy bodily out of the waves, and landed him on the raft, as one might gaff a big fish, before the "Etna's" lifeboat which had been lowered at once could reach the spot.

"Well, that was the worse d-ducking I—ever—had," sputtered the rescued Blair, as breath returned, his words splashing in the amount of sea water which he had swallowed.

"It would have been a pretty bad accident for the diver



THE TENDER HELPED THE STRUGGLING BOY BACK TO THE RAFT WITH THE BOOTHOOK.



if the air-pump had gone overboard," returned the tender; "he would never come to the surface again alive. Well, the lifeboat had better take you two boys back to the 'Etna.' Perhaps they can find you some dry clothing there. I'm pretty badly drenched myself, but we"—nodding toward the pump-man—"will have to stay on the raft until the diver comes up again."

"And we lost sight of the *aéroplane*; it must have passed right over our heads while we were kicking round in the water!" lamented Quintin, shaking the wet out of his hair, his eyes greedily searching the horizon for a further glimpse of that winged man.

"Oh! The aviator was out of sight long ago; he must have been going about a mile a minute; the *monoplane* was 'humming!'" chuckled the diver's tender.

"Doesn't that stool look comical?" sniffed Blair, as two dripping boys were transferred to the lifeboat. "I've lost my cap, so has Quintin!"

The stool was picked up, but not the headgear.

A quarter of an hour later the lads were parading the "Etna's" main deck, Blair enveloped in a suit of black overalls lent by the tugboat's engineer, while Quin strutted about in a costume suggestive of pirate pictures, shirt and trousers belonging to a huge deck hand of the tugboat's crew, with the sleeves rolled back to the elbow and trousers turned up to the knee. Round his head the boy twisted, turban-fashion, a red cotton handkerchief found in the pocket of the latter.

"Death to pirates!" laughed Blair, rushing upon him; and there ensued a sham battle in which, hampered by their garments, neither could declare a victory, Quin's thirteen-year-old brother, Owen, taking part in the merry onslaught, too.

"It's the first time I've worn working overalls; perhaps it won't be the last," panted Blair, pausing breathlessly. "One thing I know; I'm going to learn how to

swim as well as any Cape boy; if I should fall overboard again, I don't propose to be hooked back like a fish!"

"Right you are, my lad!" Captain Andy who had descended from the pilot house, stroked the boy's shoulder. "If you're to assist yourself or others—and there'll come a time, mark you, when you'll want to help somebody else more than you ever wanted to help yourself—you can do it only by making the best of every power that God has given you of mind and body."

Blair nodded respectfully. During their experience on the raft both boys had felt that in a world where men faced such dangers as did these ocean divers in the service of their fellow-men—or took risks, as did the aviator, in the cause of progress—a boy would disgrace his boyhood who could not be hard working and unselfish, too.

"If Uncle Jim had taken *me* on the raft, I wouldn't have fallen into the water," piped up Owen. "I saw the man-bird longer than you did, Blair!"

"Yes; I wonder when we'll catch sight of him again?" young Hammond sighed longingly.

"Well, Harry Desper is staying at Bayhead with his family," suggested Captain Andy. "The 'Etna' will be going round there, next Friday. I'm going on her. You boys can come, too, if you want to! I'm bound to see that monoplane again; and I'd like to know whether Harry remembers me, and the summer mornings, six years ago, when he got up early to go fishing with me in my little dory. That dory is hauled up on the beach near my home now; she's getting old and tender," added the sailor quaintly. "I don't know whether she's seaworthy or not."

. . . . .

Harry Desper did remember that dory, and the sturdy little rowboat, in which he had gone dawn-fishing on many a morning with old Captain Andy Davis, long be-

fore he ever dreamed of navigating an airship. He remembered Captain Andrew, too.

When on the Friday morning following his first startling appearance as an aviator on the Cape shores, the tugboat "Etna" hove to alongside a jutting pier at Bay-head, and three boys—Blair, Quintin and Owen—jumped ashore with Captain Andy, they beheld a very boyish-looking young man, leaning against a shed, whistling blithely.

"There he is! There's *Harry Desper*!" exclaimed the old captain joyously, making towards him.

The boys approached, too, with beating hearts. They could hardly believe, Blair and Quintin, that the daring aviator, who had created such a gale of excitement when they first beheld him facing an aerial gale, stirred up by his propeller, as he flew a thousand feet above headland and sea, could walk the earth like an ordinary mortal.

Owen almost expected to see wings attached to his person, which he could spread at will and soar into the blue.

But, at sight of the sea captain, Desper sprang forward with outstretched hand and manner as boyishly eager as their own.

"Hullo, Captain Andy!" he cried, "I'm ever so glad to see you. I was thinking of making a flight across the Cape to call on you; but I remembered that there is no safe landing place for an aeroplane in that swampy field near your home—my machine might have turned turtle with me as I came down."

"Well, if I had seen you 'coasting' down from the clouds near my doorway, I guess the shock might have been too much for me," chuckled the old man. "But I'm mighty glad to see you, Harry, and proud to know that you've done something in the world. I did catch a sight of you Monday last, flying from headland to headland, high above the harbor and breakwater. Here are two

boys who were thrown into such a gale of excitement by the sight of you, that, like a pair of geese-heads, they slipped off the diver's raft into the sea. They nearly wrecked the raft and brought disaster to the diver. However, they'll know better next time. And they'd be proud to shake hands with a real aviator."

"Oh! I read of that raft accident in the newspaper," returned Harry Desper, extending a ready palm to each of the three lads in turn. At touch of that glad hand, awe of the air hero melted away.

"I didn't fall into the water; I wasn't on the raft," declared Owen, bent on proving an *alibi*.

"Oh, ho! Then I'll let *you* see my monoplane, since you were the only one to keep dry!" jested the aviator. "Don't you want to have a look at it, Captain Andy? It's under the tent in that field."

He led the way to a canvas shelter.

And there was the *aéroplane*, earth's latest wonder, with its light framework of aluminum, its spreading wings, or main supporting planes, at the forward end of the machine, with the smaller auxiliary wings at the rear, connected with the rudder.

"I declare! There's a great deal of a flying machine," ejaculated Quintin.

"It certainly is a slick bit of mechanism," commented Captain Andy.

"It has to be. An aviator takes risks enough even with the best machine," was Harry Desper's reply. "'Twas well for me, Captain Andy," he added warmly, "that you made me throw my first cigaret into the sea, and promise never to light another that summer morning, six years ago, when I went fishing with you in your little dory. If I were to light one in the air, I'd stand a good chance of hitting the ground pretty quickly!"

The three boys, listening, registered a vow that they would have nothing to do with cigaretts either.

"My wings, you see, are of rubberized silk, made waterproof by varnishing," explained the aviator. "On the monoplane the propeller is in front, and drags it through the air, instead of astern, as it is on the tugboat which brought you here."

"How does it feel to fly?" inquired Blair, bringing out a question which had long trembled on his lips.

"Oh! I guess one likes it from the first, unless there's too much wind, or one strikes a current of air which is gusty and choppy, when you have to soar higher or drop lower, where the current is calmer."

"I suppose you wouldn't take up a passenger?" The boy's chest heaved up as he put the daring question.

"Not one of your age! I don't think I'd ever consent to carry boys aloft, who couldn't keep cool under excitement on the diver's raft," Harry Desper laughed.

"Perhaps we'd show you that we could keep our heads!" put forward Blair. Desper smiled again, with good-natured skepticism.

"Blair certainly did show presence of mind once, when he climbed a quarry boiler to escape an angry bull," suggested Captain Andy, proceeding to narrate the incident which the aviator would have set down as a story if it had not been Captain Andrew who told it.

"Now, I'm sorry, but I'll have to ask you to get outside the field: I'm going to make a flight presently, and I can't have anybody near but my mechanics when I go up," said Desper, after he had exhibited his fine gasoline engine, with the pilot's seat right over it in what he called the monoplanes "cockpit." "Oh, I forgot to call your attention to the number on my rudder at the tail of the machine!" indicating a big black "9" on the rudder—on the steering apparatus so delicately strung with piano wire connecting it with the aviator's body. "If I should be flying low, boys, in that race from Boston to the Light, and you are there to see, you can identify me by this number."



"Won't we cheer if we see you winning?" chorused the trio, as with Captain Andy, they reluctantly betook themselves into a neighboring field.

"So the aviator, like the diver, has two attendants," remarked Quintin as, watching from a distance, they beheld the pair of mechanics bring the monoplane forth from the tent.

There ensued a period of breathless waiting while the two attendants busied themselves with preparations.

"There! he's off. *He's—off!*" cried Blair of a sudden, his excited breath tickling his throat like a feather, as that dragon-fly monoplane started away in a little run along the ground, after the manner of some great birds when preparing to fly; then rose proudly into the air, its engine humming like a mammoth bee.

As it climbed the sunlight to the tree tops' level, with the body of the aviator, now in his suit of tan leathers, like the golden body of a bird between the spreading forward wings, Quin clasped his hands in semi-despair.

"Ouch! he struck the branches of that maple tree. He's into the elm—now. Oh! he'll hit the ground again!" cried the boy, tragically.

"No! No! He's steered clear of the elm tree!" Blair's mouth yawned like a fissure as he gazed upward, his nostrils being quite insufficient for breathing at this moment, while the rebounding *aéroplane*, on the verge of a fall, righted itself miraculously, owing to the skill and nerve of its youthful pilot, bidding adieu to the tallest bough that would ensnare it.

"He's going to fly right over this apple tree, above our heads," exclaimed Blair, entranced. "If I could throw an apple high enough I might hit him!"

He shot a ruddy pippin into the air as he spoke. The apple, tethered by gravitation, fell humbly earthward again, struck the crown of Captain Andy's straw hat, and rebounded to the ground.

"Whoo! whoo!" barked the sea captain, "when next you, Blair, want to make a target of an air man I hope I won't be around. But doesn't he look proud sailing off, up there, Harry Desper, that 'boy of a man,' to whom we were talking down here half an hour ago?" And Captain Andrew waved his battered straw hat at the sun-tipped aeroplane with its youthful pilot, which soared ever higher into the blue. "It lays over anything that I ever saw or even dreamed of, lads!" he added, with a humid light in his eye.

The latter broke into exultant joy whoops.

"Three cheers for Desper—for Harry Desper! Whoo! whoo! bravo! hurrah!" they shouted exultantly. "We know he'll win in that air-race!"

The little crowd of spectators around them took up the cheers.

The tugboat "Etna," now under the command of her diving master, Captain Jim, tooted shrilly with her steam whistle applause that mingled with the monoplane's climbing buzz.

"What are you thinking of, Blair?" asked Captain Andy, catching a peculiar expression of the boy's face as his dazzled gaze dropped earthward.

"I'm thinking—" Blair drew a long breath, "of how I wish that we—Quin and I—could show the aviator that we could 'keep cool,' have presence of mind in an emergency," feeling that by their behavior on the raft they had forfeited the opportunity of ever being taken aloft by Harry Desper as passengers on an "air-ride"!

He little dreamed that the day was not far distant when the aviator's shining triumph would temporarily collapse like a bubble, and his life be in the hands of two boys whose feet pressed the humble sod of Mother Earth.



## CHAPTER V.

### DISASTER TO THE AVIATOR.

**I**N THE days which followed his witnessing the ascension to cloudland of Harry Desper's monoplane, the wish was often in Blair's mind that he could prove to the daring aviator his ability to be cool and resourceful in an emergency—notwithstanding the fact that Quintin and he had allowed excitement to oust judgment on the diver's raft.

Under the prod of this desire—but more still due to the heroic examples before him in the diver and aviator—the boy set himself, as Captain Andy had devised, to develop every power he possessed of mind and body, feeling that, otherwise, if the time should come for him to prove his mettle, the great moment would catch him unprepared.

He practiced rowing and swimming until he could almost outdo Quintin, who was half amphibious, learning that in sport or study the door to the highest pleasure opens only to the lad who strives for perfection.

"That whistle of yours is much better worth 'patenting' now, my lad, than it was on the day when I first ran across you!" joked Captain Andy one morning toward the end of August, when Blair met him on the quarry pier with a new whistle on his lips, so full of original flourishes, so crisp and expressive of manly activity, that it might have justified exclusive proprietary rights—if buoyancy and cheer could be "patented."

"That boy is going to make good. He's beginning to go ahead under all the sail he can carry," muttered the

old captain to himself in his seaman's metaphor. Aloud he added: "Are you going off on the 'Etna' to the breakwater this morning, Blair—Quin and you? You two are becoming as inseparable as a pair of magpies."

"Yes, we're bound out to the breakwater," Blair made answer. "I love to watch those fourteen divers at work when the ocean is calm enough to see them, or to watch Captain Jim coming up, feet foremost, for fun, when it isn't!"

But he did not see Captain Jim perform that comical feat that day. He beheld something more laughable still. He saw that old practical joker, Grandfather Ocean, tumble the diver about on the surface of the waves, instead of allowing him to go down beneath them, because he happened to get too much pumped air into his rubber dress, inflating it so that, despite all the metal weight on him, he could not sink, but floundered about on the sea's breast like half a dozen porpoises rolled into one!

Shriek after shriek of laughter burst from the boys—Blair, Quintin and Owen—as they watched the aquatic gambols of that baffled diver, with the sunlight burnishing his globelike helmet and its plate-glass windows, like the great round head of some sea monster with eyes before and behind.

"When, next, Captain Jim twits us with nearly capsizing his raft and losing his air-pump on our first catching sight of an aviator, we'll get back by joking *him* about a diver who couldn't dive!" suggested Blair, as that floundering diver, letting the superfluous air escape through a valve in his helmet, at last disappeared to the bottom.

"Yes, that's an annoying trick, boys, when one gets too much air in the dress," said Captain Jim later, when he came to the surface to rest and breathe, and faced a volley of banter from the two elder lads. "But there's a queerer trick still which that pumped air plays on me

once in a while, when it gets into the toes of the rubber dress and steals under the soles of my feet while I'm at work, so that I can't keep my footing on the bottom."

"How does it feel then?" questioned both boys in the same breath.

"Why, as if the diver had wings on his feet which carry him upward through the sea as Harry Desper's fine wings bear him upward when he starts to fly! And there's something worse than coming to the surface against your will; that's being forced to stay down when you want to come up, being *caught below!*"

"How does this happen?" Blair asked eagerly.

"Oh, if one is moving great, heavy rocks under water, as we divers are doing at the base of the breakwater, sometimes one gets a leg or one's whole body jammed between those rocks; then, it is often impossible to free one's self, until another diver comes down to extricate you."

It was on the afternoon of that very day when the two elder boys stood on the deck of the flat-bottomed scow which transported stone from the quarries to the breakwater, and which was connected with the tugboat by a short tow-rope, that Quintin nudged Blair's arm uneasily.

"It seems to me that Uncle Jim is down longer than usual, this time, without coming up to breathe!" he remarked, with a catch in his breath.

To-day, the diver had gone down from the scow's side, not from his raft.

Almost simultaneously that diver's life line, held between his tender's finger and thumb, began to twitch. Blair was used to the three distinct jerks on the line which, according to the diver's signaling code, meant, "Go ahead; haul me up!"

Now, the startled color rushed in a hot splash to both boys' faces—hoisting the red flag of danger.

That hempen lifeline twitched *five times*.

"*Caught below!*" Quin translated the meaning of those five jerks as if in a nightmare. "Uncle Jim is caught below!"

The scarlet flush receded from Blair's cheeks, leaving them paler than they had been in the quarry engine-house after his escape from Jewett's bull.

During the past month the boy, awakening to hero worship, had set up in his imagination twin pedestals and on them placed two heroes, Captain Jim, the diver, and the daring aviator, Harry Desper.

Now, somewhere beneath that sea—not glassy to-day, but gray and impenetrable—one of these heroes was prisoned, his powerful body jammed between heavy rocks. Blair knew that the pinioned diver, looking up, could see the brilliant afternoon sun like a tiny star winking down at him through the green twilight of ocean's bed. He might never see it as the sun again!

And at the thought, to the boy, too, that sun seemed to go out of commission; the summer afternoon to become gray, miserable twilight!

"If I could do something for him! If only I could *do something!*" he gasped, his hands closing and unclosing as if they must grapple some means of rescue.

"There's nothing we boys can do—yet." Quintin's face was colorless, too, as he answered. "None of the other divers are working near him. But—see! the 'Etna's' lifeboat has been lowered. It's flying through the water to that distant tugboat, to bring along another diver, to go down and—free—Uncle Jim."

To the two lads the next half-hour was about the worst they had ever known, while they watched that speeding lifeboat fetch a second diver, saw him don the belt and helmet, and go down under the waves, like a rescuing knight.

They kept their eyes riveted on Captain Jim's lifeline.

"If there should be five jerks again, that would mean that the other diver couldn't extricate him," murmured Quin through dry lips.

Ten slow minutes passed. That drab lifeline began to twitch. The big world seemed balancing itself on a hair to the boys as they counted the jerks. "If there should be five? One—two—three! The hemp ceased vibrating.

"Three tugs on the line! That means, 'Haul up!' Lend a hand to haul him up, boys!" exploded the tender.

And the two lads laying hold of that lifeline hauled with every grain of strength they possessed.

There was a floundering commotion in the sea. The second diver came to the surface, with Captain Jim in his arms.

"I had—hard work—to extricate him," panted the rescuer when his helmet was removed. "His right leg was caught—between two big rocks; I guess it's badly—crushed."

Swooning from pain and stifled exhaustion, Captain Jim, relieved of his heavy armor, was laid on the sunlit deck. Presently his heavy eyes opened and turned to the lads standing near.

"Oh! I'm not hurt badly," he said. "I'll be wearing the dress again in a few days. I guess you were frightened, boys; your faces are the color of stale foam," he added with a glimmering smile. "When we get ashore I want you—lads—to run and tell my mother that—that I've had a little accident. She's not well. You'll know how to do it, Blair—so's not to frighten her. My father, Capt'n Andy, is getting to think a whole lot of you!"

"Didn't I tell you that Uncle Jim was a fine man?" whispered Quin passionately, the light reviving in his reddened eyes.

Blair nodded; his eyes, too, held some salt water which did not come in over the scow's rail with the divers; truly, as he felt, in association with this brave knight of the rub-

ber dress and heavy armor, no boy could help becoming a fine man himself!

During the ensuing days when Captain Jim was laid up and the boys' trips to the ocean breakwater, perforce, ceased, they made up for the deprivation by frequent excursions to Bayhead, where they seized another opportunity of seeing Harry Desper soar into the air on his monoplane, and perform wonderful circling flights at varying heights above the sea.

The aviator treated them with such cordial intimacy, at first for the sake of his old friend, Captain Andy, and later on their own account, that they became a center of attraction among the boys on the Cape, and walked about in reflected glory as friends of the "boy aviator," Desper.

He permitted them again to examine his monoplane, at length, explaining the various feats he performed in flying; how he "coasted" down from cloudland, as they might coast downhill on a bicycle, and the danger when he "banked at a turn," and the tilting aëroplane drifted or skidded many feet through the air.

Also, in company with the boys, he visited the injured diver, Captain Jim, and entertained him with lively accounts of his first experiences as a man-bird.

"I'm planning to make a flight round this part of the coast, past Myrtle Cove, to-morrow," he said, "if the weather is not too gusty. If you're on the watch, you may see me."

"I don't think you'll fly to-morrow, Harry, my lad—unless you want to do so in the worst wind you ever flew in!" prophesied old Captain Andy, who was present. "It will be blowing pretty hard before morning."

Captain Andy was right. September came in like a lion; gales which usually did not strike the Cape until its second week, assailed it in the first. For two days and nights it blew a "screecher," as Captain Andrew said. The third day the wind decreased. On the fourth there

did not seem to be a breath stirring in the heavens. But the wild-looking sea still hurled itself in great, shaggy waves against the shore, with the roar of a battering-ram.

"I never saw the sea like that before; those wide rings of foam inclosing about an acre of water—and the slow, towering waves throwing up their white bonnets!" remarked Blair to his inseparable friend, Quintin, as they sat on a stone fence below Captain Andy's cottage at Myrtle Cove, watching the angry ocean.

"That's what we sailors call the 'old sea' after a storm," explained Captain Andrew, himself, limping out to join them, moving stiffly, as was his wont, since the accident of which he had told Blair at their first meeting; his right arm was almost powerless. "And a bad old sea that is for any craft to face, be it sailing vessel or rowboat!" he went on. "The ocean, when it has been lashed into fury, doesn't subside as quickly as the wind: it is often at its worst when the gale seems over."

"I wonder the storm didn't tear my little old dory from her moorings," continued the sea captain, after a pause, pointing to a small rowboat hauled up high and dry on the sands of a narrow cove beneath them, the only boat within sight. "That's the dory, boys, in which Harry Desper used to go fishing with me, six years ago. She's almost worn out now; I haven't overhauled her for some time; I don't know whether she's seaworthy or not!"

"Harry Desper wasn't able to make the flight round this part of the Cape, of which he talked four days ago," Blair suggested. "Maybe he'll attempt it to-day; he wants to get all the practice he can before entering this big air-race."

"Whoo! whoo! I hope he won't try it to-day," ejaculated Captain Andy. "A hard puff of wind might strike him that would mean an end to the *aéroplane*!"

"But the wind has ceased," argued Blair.

"Ho! ho! has it? Look at those low-lying clouds; not



much more than a thousand feet above the sea!" The gray-haired sailor shook his finger at the dark banks of vapor merging into clinging tendrils of fog. "There's wind enough in those clouds, my lad, to blow the hair off your heads. It's breezing up even now!" as a rising gust slapped his cheek.

"The wind she blew a hurricane,  
Bimeby she'll blow some more!"

he sang in a fuzzy, blustering voice.

"Oh, go on, gran'father; sing that song through," coaxed Quintin, whose delight was in the old man's sea songs.

But Blair, who at another time would have joined in the pleading, had sprung to his feet in a tumble of excitement that matched the commotion of the old sea.

"Don't you hear it? Don't you hear it?" he cried.

"Hear what?"

"The buzz of an *aéroplane*. I can't see it. But I hear the engine." The boy bent forward, listening, as if every pulse in his body were an ear.

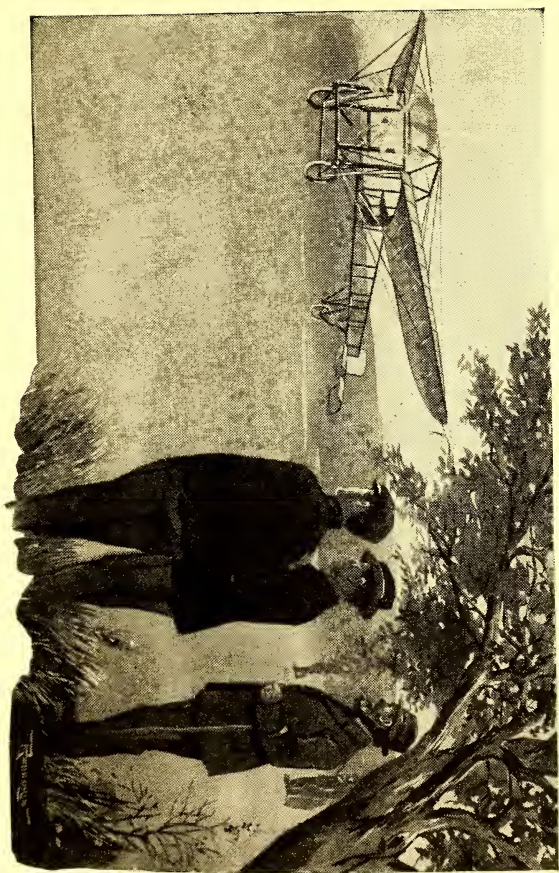
"Pshaw! *you* dream *aéroplanes*," mocked Quintin, springing to his feet, too, however.

"He's not dreaming. I hear it, too, the engine!" Captain Andy had likewise risen; his old body towered, stiff as a ramrod, with excitement and alarm.

"I see it! I *see it*—now!" fired off Blair. "It's Harry Desper's monoplane. Oh! that dragon fly!" as the buzzing *aéroplane* darted from behind a barrier of dark cloud, was seen for five seconds, festooned with fog-tendrils, then disappeared through another gateway of cloud-land.

"That's the greatest thing that ever happened. I—I see it again." Quintin waved his cap almost hysterically at that gray, exploring dragon fly flitting across another

"THAT'S THE GREATEST THING I EVER SAW," SAID QUINTIN.



cloud-gap, to be lost again in aërial mystery, high above the ocean, at a point nearly half a mile from shore.

"Isn't it gr-reat to hear him buzzing and thumping up there in the clouds, when you can't see him?" Blair's upturned face was touched with shining awe.

The wild wonder of this flight fairly bewitched the two boys; to see that youthful aviator, Harry Desper, daringly playing a game of bopeep with them in cloudland above the foamy tumble of the old sea!



## CHAPTER VI.

### BOY HEROES.

“YOU’RE right, Blair; it certainly beats all, to hear him buzzing and thumping up there in the clouds —when we can’t see him!” exclaimed old Captain Andrew, echoing the boy’s words, as his trained eyesight, accustomed to scan long distances at sea, searched the low-lying clouds for another glimpse of that daring aviator, playing a game of bo-peep with Mother Earth.

“There he is! I make him again!” cried the sea-captain, as that dragon-fly monoplane darted forth from behind another screen of clouds, exciting the spectators by a view of it for half-a-dozen seconds, then teasingly vanished once more, while the bee-like buzz of its engine was still audible.

“Well, if that isn’t the greatest thing that ever happened: to see him skylarking—really skylarking—up there in the clouds!” laughed Blair. “I think it’s positively ‘spooky!’” His gaze searched those gray cloud-tents for another peep at the invisible winged man—secreted among them.

“Who knows but he may be camping up there by’n-by: so may we all be, for that matter!” suggested Quintin, blinking as if, dazzled by the prospect, he began to see no limit to the aerial possibilities of man.

“Oh, there’s nothing small about you,” Blair threw back at him. “As for me, I’d be satisfied if Harry Desper would only take us up aloft—one at a time—on an air trip! There! he’s not playing hide-and-seek in the clouds any longer,” added the boy excitedly. “He has dropped lower—he’s flying lower, now.”

"I guess he found the atmosphere up there too thick for him," suggested Captain Andrew. "I'm afraid he's finding the air pretty gusty, too; it keeps breezing up!" sniffing the freshening wind.

The *aëroplane* had dropped several hundred feet; as the aviator glided down from cloudland, his body, between those spreading wings, was visible to the thrilled spectators.

"He's turning!" cried Quintin, suddenly. "I guess he's going to head toward shore! Perhaps he'll make a landing on the little beach here!"

Speechlessly the trio, old Captain Andy and the boys, watched the youthful aviator as he attempted this most dangerous feat in his whole flight, that of "banking at a turn," when his tilting monoplane, turning at a sharp angle, would drift many feet in the air.

Harry Desper had performed this difficult exploit many times before, but he had never yet flown in such a wind as the reviving breeze which was springing up. For the gale which had stirred up the "old sea" beneath him, was not dead, but dozing.

Right on the turn, a hard puff of wind, such as Captain Andy had dreaded, struck his forward wings—those main supporting planes—and tilted the flying machine to a dangerous position.

He dropped through the air like a shot.

"He's—going; He's f-falling! Oh! oh! oh-h! There—he goes!" The cries, blending into one shocked wail, broke from the old man and boys.

They saw Harry Desper beneath those dark clouds among which he had been sporting a few minutes before, make a desperate attempt to right his machine, to control it, and recover his equilibrium.

In vain! Down he came—his golden triumph collapsing! The falling *aëroplane* struck the ocean in the center of one of those wide, pale circles of foam left by the recent storm.

The two boys and Captain Andy, stiff with horror, saw that still angry old sea open its white-bearded mouth and swallow Harry Desper with his monoplane as completely as, in calmer mood, they had seen it swallow the diver.

"His machine has carried him under with it. But he may—he may free himself and come to the surface!" It was Captain Andy who broke the stony silence which fell upon the three watchers. "Oh! if only I had my right arm and a boat!" cried the old man wildly. "There's no boat but my old dory and I don't know whether she's seaworthy!" his eyes vainly searching sea and shore for a more trusty craft.

Even as he spoke, he was limping, with all the hurry he could make, toward the beach and that doubtful dory.

"If only I could hurry as I once could!" he cried again, groaning at every ten steps, not because of the pain which the attempt at speed caused in his right leg, which, with the right arm, had been broken in that accident a few months before, neither having mended properly yet, but because every second's delay lessened the chance of rescue for the submerged aviator.

If a rescue could be made?

Of a sudden, the impotent groan ceased on the old sea-captain's lip.

Something shot swiftly past him, making such a vivid spot of color against the grayness of sea and sky (so much darker since the accident), that, irresistibly, it shot a thin streak of rosy hope through Captain Andy's despair.

It was Blair Hammond's crimson sweater; the identical sweater, shrunk an inch by watery vicissitudes, which he wore when he foolishly tempted danger and Jewett's bull on the disused golf links.

The boy's face was red, too, congested by shock! The eyelids and lips trembled as if facing a pinching gust. But in his eyes, as he glanced backward over his crimson



shoulder, was a staggering light of courage and resolution that fairly shone.

"*Quin!*" he cried, "we can get that dory out faster than Cap'n Andy can. He can't row fast because of his right arm and we can!"

Quintin was already at his heels, fired by the same thought.

Slighting the roundabout pathway where Captain Andy was straining in a stiff attempt at speed, the two boys leaped, like goats, from crag to crag, and ledge to ledge, downward over a stretch of ragged rocks that separated them from the narrow beach.

"Boys! Boys!" Captain Andy's cry rang after them. "I don't know whether that dory is seaworthy or not. Harry mayn't come to the surface. And that old sea for you to face! Her oars are in her, boys!" he added, torn between an anguish of longing to save the aviator and terror for the two lads rushing to breast the sullen swell of the sea in a doubtful boat.

If the lads heard they paid no heed, for, now, a whooping cry broke from Blair whose eyes—turned seaward as he ran—were riveted on that spot of heaving ocean within the pale ring of foam, which had swallowed Harry Desper and his monoplane.

"*There he is!*" cried the boy. "There's—his head! And his hands up! He's come to the surface!"

With the sight of those hands appealing to them—though they disappeared instantly as the aviator went under again—nothing could hold the two lads back from an attempt to save him.

Captain Andy ceased to shout discouragement, too. He, also, had momentarily seen the youthful aviator's head, like a black ball, on the crest of a tumbling wave, and those upflung arms praying for help, with a cry whose faint echo reached the shore.

"*There's Harry!* There's the lad!" yelled the old sea-



man. "Oh, if only he can keep afloat until the boys reach him! Oh, if only they had an able boat!"

"As a boy, Harry was a star swimmer," he told himself in a stifled mumble. "But he can't swim much in that rough water, hampered by his clothes and leathers and that old sea slapping him in the mouth, and shutting his breath off!"

But there was no "able boat." And even at this moment the two boys, in whom hope joined hands with heroism, now that they had seen the aviator's head, and appealing hands, were severing the mooring-line that secured the aged dory, with two quick slashes of Blair's pocketknife, and shoving her off into the surf, breaking wildly in the little cove.

"Oh! she's such an old tub; we can't make her fly fast. One might as well put to sea in a shoe-box!" groaned Quintin.

"All the same, we've got to make her go; we've got to save him!" Blair's words were drowned in the spray slapping him in the face as, splashing through the foamy surf, he took his place in the boat, and started to row, with all the developed strength and skill which recent practice had given to his arms.

Quintin's rowing equaled his swimming. It was not the first time that he had put off through a rough sea, to rescue a drowning man. But his previous experiences had been in company with some mature life-saver and in a boat whose strength and speed could be trusted.

It was a different matter to fight the towering swell of the sullen sea in this old dory.

"We're—making her go just the—same!" he gasped, panting with rowing, as if answering his own thoughts aloud. "We—we'll be at him in ten minutes—if he can only keep afloat! Whoo! there's a big one coming," with a glance over his shoulder at a great white-headed wave, rearing upward into a towering curl as it advanced upon

the struggling little boat, as if to trample and swallow her.

Both boys set their teeth, feeling through all their straining bodies that it might prove too much for their old boat.

But the "big one" broke before it reached them. The boat was caught in its curl, lifted high, swept nearer to the struggling aviator.

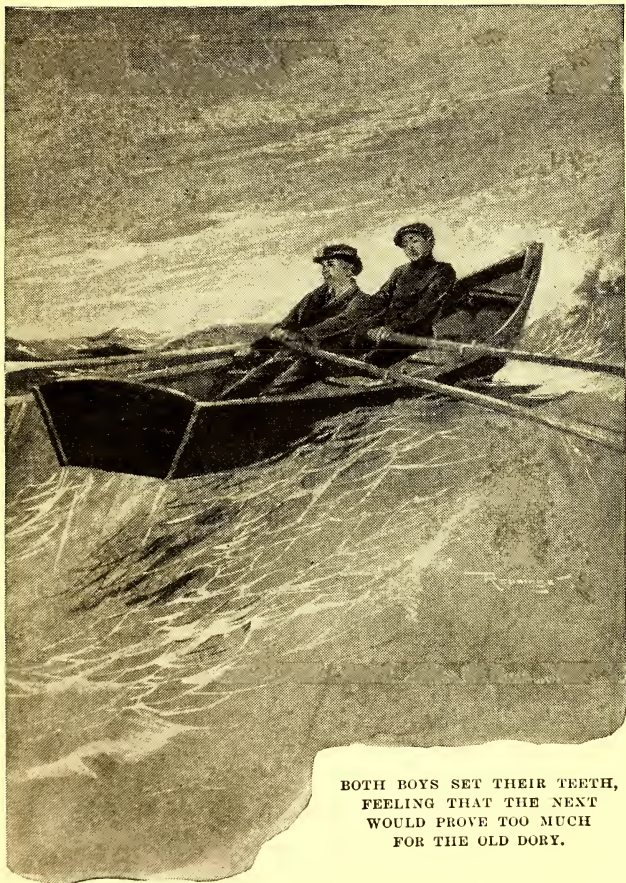
"He's on top—still. I can see—his—head," Blair coughed out the words presently, with a glance over his ruddy shoulder, drenched now with spray, as he bent to the oar. "Here's another, the size of a house—pushing its white comb along!" he panted in the next breath, as again a white-crested comber swept towards them, as if bent on annihilating the rescuing dory.

Captain Andy had clambered painfully to a tall rock, whence he could watch for glimpses of Harry Desper's head and for those appealing arms, thrown aloft for a second amid the tumble of sea—Captain Andy held his breath.

"They're brave boys," he gasped. "If only they had a better boat! Oh! if she should wash to pieces under them?" with his eyes on the buffeted dory.

But the once sturdy little rowboat seemed like a human creature, realizing that she had done fine service in her day, had saved other drowning people, and that the last feat which mankind asked of her was that she should rescue this youthful aviator, who had fished from her many a morning before he dreamed of navigating an airship and having his name known over the country.

She creaked in every plank, racked by the boys' furious rowing, like a thing in pain. But she breasted that big comber grandly. It tossed her high, lifted her bow out of water, and tried to trip her; but Quintin was accustomed to managing a rowboat in a rough sea, and Blair had had practice lately: the dory held her own, and rode triumphantly on the great wave's back!



BOTH BOYS SET THEIR TEETH,  
FEELING THAT THE NEXT  
WOULD PROVE TOO MUCH  
FOR THE OLD DORY.

"I thought that comber would trip her; I thought 'twould roll her over like a chip!" murmured Captain Andy, feeling as if there were a heaving sea within himself. "But she's holding her own; she's making good. And Harry is on top still! He's swimming towards her.

"That dory is certainly behaving herself. Those boys are setting their teeth and driving her for all she's worth," he told himself, a minute later, with his eyes on Blair's red sweater—still like a rosy spot of hope amid the foamy tumble of sea.

The old man's gaze turned upward a moment; a prayer quivered on his lips. Then he shouted encouragement to the rowers—advice which failed to reach them.

"Take it easy, boys! Don't get excited! Keep cool—and you'll land him yet!" he cried in his gusty, far-carrying voice, trained to travel distances at sea.

And then to the swimming aviator, having hard work to keep his chin out of water amid those foamy water hills—trammeled by the clothing he wore in the air—with that old sea stealing up his nostrils and into his mouth, trying to choke his breath off:

"Keep cool, Harry! Hang on! Keep up! Those boys'll get you! They'll reach you in a minute with the boat!" he shouted.

They did reach him—fighting inch by inch the ocean. But now came the worst test for them, for the dory, and for Captain Andy, straining his eyes to watch them, and feeling his own inactivity as keenly as the boys had felt theirs when the diver was "caught below."

"Can they land him? Can they get him aboard, without capsizing her?" the old seaman asked himself, tortured by anxiety. If only I were with them! But Quin knows how to rescue a drowning man; he's helped me do it before. And Harry wouldn't lose his head!"

However, that flat-bottomed dory, despite its age, was hard to capsize. One racking minute! Captain Andrew

drew his breath like a stepladder, whose every rung was a gasp of suspense. Then he broke into a cry:

"Bravo! They've landed him, so far. They've got him into the boat. Those boys are —crackajacks!" as the brave old boat headed back toward shore, with a third figure, that of Harry Desper, in her stern.

But the fight was not over.

There were other "big ones," great waves, to grapple with. But, now, these, as they "shoved their white combs along," swept the dory shoreward, too; for the incoming tide was in her favor.

Once the giant push of the old sea was too great. She disappeared altogether in the embrace of a wave—went down into a foamy hollow! The light which was flickering again in Captain Andy's eye was blown out, as by a cruel gust.

"She—she's gone! The sea's got her!" he cried, tottering where he stood.

But once more, the dory, dripping from stem to stern, reappeared: that vivid blotch of color and spot of hope, Blair's sweater, rose above the foam.

"She's on top still!" cried the old man. "If—if the Lord hadn't been with them, she wouldn't have come up again, that time!"

Sure in faith that "the Lord would be with them" still, and bring those brave boys, with the aviator whom they had rescued, safe to shore, Captain Andy dropped from his rock, limped, with all the speed he could make, to where the sea broke on the narrow beach, and plunged knee-deep into the surf, standing by to grasp the dory's bow directly it should come within reach.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE AIR RACE.

WHEN the boys, Blair and Quintin—followed by the rescued aviator—leaped from the dory, and, splashing through the surf breaking in the little cove, waded ashore, they found, not Captain Andy only, but a small crowd of men, women and boys, waiting to welcome them. For the aviator's flight and the accident to the aëroplane had been witnessed from more distant spots along the shore.

The news had spread. Two little steam launches came panting up, ere the dory reached the beach, and among the greeting throng was Captain Jim, the diver, whose injured leg was so far recovered that he could now hobble about.

"So they got you, Harry, my boy!" said Captain Andy, as the aviator, a strange spectacle in his dripping leathers, leaned, exhausted, against a tall boulder. "Those boys landed you, all right! I never saw lads of their age row as they did. They made that old dory stretch herself."

He pointed exultingly to Blair and Quintin squatted on the sands in two breathless heaps, with their aching arms hugging their knees and feeling as if their hearts creaked, like the dory's planks, from the strain they had endured.

"Yes, they got me; they saved my life," returned Harry Desper gaspingly. "I—couldn't—have kept up until one of the steam launches—reached me. I couldn't have kept afloat—another minute. My machine dragged me under," thinking sadly of the submerged monoplane. "And I had hard work—to disengage myself."

"Boys!" he added, after a minute or two, recovering



from the effects of that submerged struggle and his fight with the sea. "Boys!" with a half-choked little laugh, "*I take it all back.*"

"Take what back?" Blair, puffing like a grampus, lifted one eye from his breathless study of the defeated sea.

"I take back the charge I brought against you—because of the diver's raft—that you couldn't 'keep your heads' and show presence of mind in an emergency!" returned Harry Desper, his laugh coming freer. "If ever I take any passengers aloft with me on my *aéroplane*, it will be you two—one at a time, of course!"

"Your *aéroplane*—is gone." It was Quintin who spoke breathlessly now. "How about that coming air-race?"

"Yes, isn't it too bad that I lost my machine, with the race so near?" The aviator looked reproachfully at the sea which had robbed him. "But this breeze is the worst wind I ever flew in!" he added, apologizing for his accident, while the said breeze stirred the hair plastered to his boyish forehead.

"What are you going to do about it?" asked Captain Jim, the "Etna's" master.

"Why, I think I'll send word at once to the *aéronautic* factory for another monoplane of the same type, and enter the race just the same," was Harry's reply.

A hearty cheer greeted this answer.

"Then I'll tell you what *I'll* do," Captain Jim turned to the small throng about him. "I'll run the 'Etna' round to Boston Harbor that day. As many of you as like can come on her. And we'll watch the air-race from the water."

"Can we be of the party?" asked Blair.

"Well, I should think so," returned the "Etna's" captain with a broad smile. "Why, you boys will be the topnotch, the guests of honor! You saved the aviator's life."

"I couldn't have done that two months ago," mur-



mured Blair, speaking low and breathlessly, as if to himself. "I'd have wanted to—badly—but I couldn't have done it."

"What did I tell you, lad?" Captain Andy bent to the boy's ear. "Didn't I say that a time would come when you'd want to help somebody else more than you ever wanted to help yourself, and that if you failed to make the most of your powers, you wouldn't be 'in it' when that big minute came? You'll find the same thing true as regards your school work and growth in other ways."

"We'll all go on the 'Etna,' added the old sea-captain in louder tones. "And I'll tell you what; we'll take along my best binoculars; I guess, with their help, we'll be able to distinguish the number on the rudder of an aëroplane—unless the bird-men are flying very high indeed—and tell who's winning!"

"What, gran'father! those splendid marine glasses which were presented to you two years ago, for saving the crew of that Canadian steamer, in your fishing vessel?" cried Quintin in amazement. "He's so proud of those 'presentation binoculars' that he has kept them on exhibition in his parlor and never used them!" whispered the grandson in Blair's ear.

Captain Andy nodded his gray head.

I guess we have, at last, found a fitting occasion to make use of those fine binoculars—by seeing the air-race through them," answered the old sea-conqueror.

And so it happened that a week later the tugboat "Etna," with a merry sight-seeing party aboard, steamed round to the entrance of Boston Harbor, and hove to at a little distance from Boston Light—the tall lighthouse tower, whose red eye gleams at night, at the entrance to that historic harbor.

"The air-men aren't due to round the Light before one o'clock. It's only half-past twelve now; so we're in good time to see them," said Captain Jim, descending from the

crystal-paneled pilot-house of his tugboat. "The aviator who is leading on the first 'leg' of the race out to the Light, will probably win—unless some accident happens to his machine on the return flight to Boston."

"Oh! I simply can't wait to see them and find out whether Harry Desper is winning!" cried Blair, who, with Quintin, was quite unable to keep still; both boys feeling that if the leading flying-machine should be a monoplane—and a great black 9, the number on the glittering rudder—they, by their rescue of Harry Desper from a watery grave, would have a share in the winning of this world-stirring race.

"Here comes gran'father, with those grand binoculars!" cried Quintin, as Captain Andy approached the group on the main deck, a handsome leather case in his hand, from which he drew a superb pair of marine glasses, the reward of one of the many deeds of heroism during his seafaring life.

"Well, I guess we can see the men-birds through them all right!" laughed Blair admiringly.

It was nearly an hour later, punctuality not being a virtue of the air-race as yet, that Captain Andrew, searching the sky-line through those magnifying glasses, gave a welcoming cry.

"Here they come! Here's one of them! It's a *monoplane*," he announced in a breeze of excitement, sighting on the horizon a seagull-like speck, which developed rapidly into the beautiful aërial dragon fly—the type of *aéroplane* which the boys had learned to know so well.

"Let us see! *Let us see!*" they cried wildly.

Captain Andy handed the glasses to Blair, and Blair to Quintin; each could view it plainly above a point of sea many miles off, that air-conquering dragon leading the race!

"I'm sure it's Desper's monoplane! I'm sure Harry Desper is leading!" they shouted in a delirium of excite-

ment, as they returned the glasses to the old sea-captain—feeling that he ought to make early use of his own gift presented by a grateful Government by viewing the air-race through them.

Other marine glasses there were, and magnifying glasses of every description, rapidly passing from hand to hand among the pleasure party on the "Etna's" main deck. Captain Jim was studying the sky through his own particular pair.

But the swiftly skimming monoplane could now be plainly seen by the naked eye, sailing some fifteen hundred feet above the sea.

"Doesn't it look proud, skimming along up there? It seems to be telling the sea gulls that they're beaten at their own game of flying," suggested Quintin, with a laugh.

"Proud" it did look! Most wonderful! Most beautiful! Man's bird-challenging triumph! So the victorious dragon fly, leading on the first "leg" of the race, circled round the gray old lighthouse tower, but high above it—high, high above the outdone seabirds wheeling about that stone tower!

"Can you see the number—the number on the rudder, Captain Andy?" cried Blair, his heart fluttering between his parted lips.

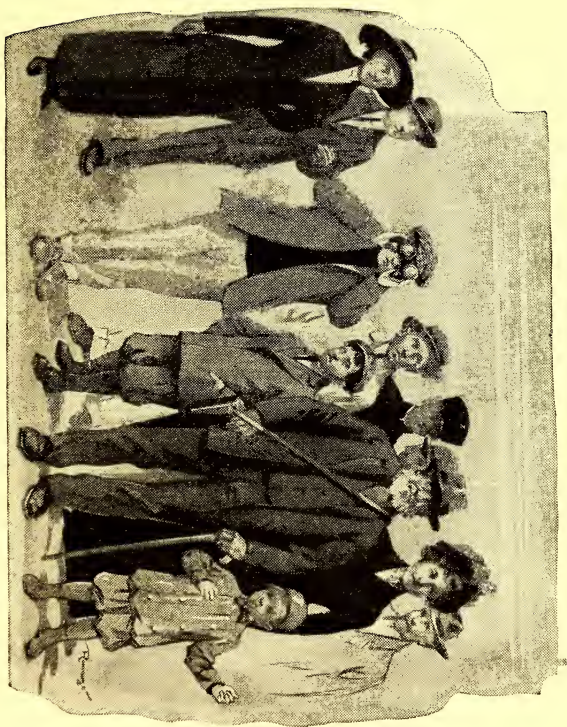
Captain Andrew silently handed the glasses to him, as if he felt that the boys who had rescued the aviator should be the ones to proclaim his triumph, so far, to the excited throng on that main deck; the weather-beaten tan of the old man's face shone golden; his eyes glistened.

And Blair, looking through those presentation glasses, emitted a joy-whoop that rent the air.

"The number on the rudder is '9'!" he proclaimed to the deck. "It's Desper's monoplane. *Harry Desper is leading!*" and he handed the powerful glasses to Quintin.

It seemed as if the very deck itself took part in the cheering that followed; certainly it did through the

"THE NUMBER ON THE RUDDER IS '9'!" BLAIR EXCLAIMED.



stamping and shuffling of excited feet upon it. Applause rainbowed the air that bore the winning aviator back to Boston—and victory!

High and clear rose a chorus of cheers, as if to support him on his return flight; the boys who had saved him, having the loudest and the final crow; while the engineer of the tugboat, who had been watching, too, made for his engine-room, and blew off three shrill blasts of the "Etna's" steam whistle, then another whistling triplet, and another; giving the winning man-bird "three times three" with a vengeance, until it seemed as if the "Etna" would really burst her steel throat!

Every other tugboat and steam launch in the harbor took up the whistling, too, and a little later came another sky-wonder, a beautiful biplane, looking more like a great white bird as it circled above the gray tower than did the dragon-fly monoplane.

But the climax of that glorious day came some hours later when the tugboat "Etna" was lying by a Boston wharf, and a taxicab whirled on to that wharf.

Harry Desper sprang out. "I managed to get away from the judges and the crowd at the aviation field," he said, jumping onto the "Etna's" deck. "I told them that I wanted to meet some old friends and the boys who had rescued me when I fell into the water."

As the admiring throng gathered round him, one old gentleman of the party, moved by a sudden inspiration, exclaimed:

"I propose three cheers for the hero of the air—and three more for the heroes of the sea!" he nodded toward Captain Andy and Captain Jim.

Never were cheers given with a better will.

When the joyous tumult had subsided, Harry Desper stepped forward.

"I thank you, friends!" he said. "And, now, I want to propose three cheers for the two boys who saved the

aviator's life. I think they proved themselves heroes of the deep all right, when they faced the swell of that old sea in a worn-out boat to rescue me. Perhaps they'll be heroes of the air some day, when I take them aloft, as passengers."

Enthusiastically the applause broke forth again, while the boys chimed in and cheered themselves, on the prospect of that future air trip, to the amusement of everybody else, until wharf and tugboat rang with the music of glad hearts.

THE END.













